

Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities

January is National Radon Action Month—a perfect time to promote radon awareness, testing and mitigation, and radon resistant new construction (RRNC). Radon testing is generally easiest and most effective in cooler weather months when houses tend to be closed up for warmth.

Organizations just like yours are spreading the word about this preventable health risk. Find inspiration from a sample of their events listed below and contact your state radon program for help in planning your activities. You can find contact information for your state program at www.epa.gov/iaq/whereyoulive.html.

Choosing the Right Activities

Unsure how to start planning your radon outreach activities? The following questions can help direct you to the right activities for your organization and your community.

- ▶ **1. Are you looking to form new partnerships or seeking to mobilize your existing partners?** Read **section 1** for tips about fostering effective coalitions.
- ▶ **2. Are you aware of important opinion leaders in your community?** **Section 2** contains ideas for how to engage them in spreading the word about radon.
- ▶ **3. Looking for new ideas to jazz up your community events?** Learn what other groups have tried in their communities in **section 3**.
- ▶ **4. Does your group seek to reach families and children with messages about radon?** If so, read **section 4** for tips on working with youth.
- ▶ **5. Do you seek to reach a wide audience with specific key messages?** Consider implementing a media campaign. Check out **section 5** for tips on working with the media.

1. Energize Your Partners and Stakeholders

Build a Radon Coalition in Your Community

There are many individuals and organizations in your community that have an interest in health topics. Hold an open forum for interested individuals to attend and then establish a coalition to promote radon awareness in your community. Every member of your coalition will have unique ideas for radon activities and will have access to different parts of your community. Working together as a group will be the most effective way to make radon testing and mitigation a reality in all buildings in your community.

Recognize Radon Champions

If you already have a radon coalition, National Radon Action Month is an excellent opportunity to recognize your partners for their hard work. Host an awards ceremony to honor exceptional radon advocates. Use the opportunity to inspire and energize your radon partners.

Ask Local Chapters of Health and Environmental Organizations to Promote Radon Awareness

Many local organizations in your community have regular newsletters, listservs, or mailings that they use to reach their members. Contact them to ask them to run an article on radon health risk, testing, mitigation, and radon resistant new construction. Be sure to include information on how to obtain additional radon information.

Please see pages 8 and 14 of this Kit for information on obtaining radon test kits and ordering customizable test kit coupons for tracking your activities.

Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

Host a Radon Training Workshop

Provide continuing education for key professionals such as homebuilders, real estate professionals, and environmental health professionals. Successful programs have included lunch and learn seminars, training courses for governmental housing officials, and meetings about radon resistant new construction.

2. Engage Community Leaders

Ask Your Mayor or City Council to Issue a Radon Proclamation

Invite your elected officials to proclaim January as "Radon Action Month." Encourage all community members to test for radon. Tips for working with local officials and a sample proclamation that you can customize are included in this Event Planning Kit on page 29.

Ask Community Leaders to Spread the Word about Radon

Churches, community centers, even local beauty salons and barbershops, can be effective venues for reaching out to your community. Contact ministers, community leaders, and local civic leaders and encourage them to conduct radon outreach to their members. Provide them with educational materials and information on test kits to make it easy for them to partner with you.

Work with Health Advocates and Educators

Coordinate with your local health care providers and other health-focused groups, such as the American Lung Association, to have booths, educational sessions, and presentations on radon. Invite your mayor or other officials to your event to issue a proclamation and to conduct a press event.

Connect with Local Businesses

Home improvement and hardware stores may carry radon test kits. Encourage them to promote radon testing in homes, schools, and other buildings. Ask them to create radon test kit displays in prominent store locations during National Radon Action Month and to include information on radon testing in mailings or other advertisements during January.

Contact Your Local University Medical Schools and Health Care Professionals

Health care students and practitioners can serve as speakers for your health fairs and community events. You can also work with health care providers to incorporate radon messages into their practices and provide educational materials for their patients.

Coordinate with Your Local Utilities to Promote Radon Awareness and Testing

Send a bill insert to your local utility providers (e.g. water, gas, electric) and ask them to include it with their January bill statement mailings. This is an easy, effective, and inexpensive way to reach the vast majority of your community.



Collaborate with Experts from the Radon Professionals Speaker's Bureau

Coordinate with the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists, Inc. (AARST) for your community activities. You can contact local radon experts from the Radon Professionals Speaker's Bureau (through the National Radon Proficiency Program) to participate in your event as a speaker, conduct a radon test demonstration, or field questions from the media. AARST has the following Speaker's Bureau lists available:

Radon Professionals Speaker's

Bureau: An extensive database of radon testers, mitigators, and other industry professionals across the country who are available for speaking opportunities. All experts have completed the National Radon Proficiency Program. View the list at: www.radongas.org/speaker.htm

AARST Key Radon Subject Experts: A list of selected national experts who are available to speak about radon science and health risk. View the list at: www.aarst.org/key_radonscience_speakers

If you have additional questions or requests for coordinating with AARST during National Radon Action Month, please send an e-mail to: director@aarst.com.

Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

3. Take Your Message to the Community

Arrange a Display at Local Sporting Events

Set up a booth or display near a concession stand or ticket window and distribute radon educational materials and test kit coupons. Work with the sporting venue to show radon Public Service Announcements during half-time or other breaks in play.



Display Radon Information at Public Gathering Places

Libraries, community centers, malls, and transit centers frequented by members of your community are perfect locations to provide radon education and testing materials. Supply these locations with radon materials and ask them to display the materials in a prominent location. Be sure to check back with these locations frequently and provide them with additional materials if necessary.



Provide Radon Education at Home and Garden Events

Incorporate radon resistant construction techniques into special events with a home and garden theme. Groups have promoted National Radon Action Month at a green house or eco-house exhibit at state fairs, green building shows, lawn and patio, and landscape shows. Work with exhibit organizers to provide outreach and educational materials for visitors.

Coordinate with Welcome Wagon or Other New Home Programs

Your community may have a welcome wagon or other programs to welcome new residents. Provide these programs with brochures and test kit coupons to include with welcome packages for new residents. Be sure to include information about your coalition or program so that individuals can follow up with you if they have questions.

Use Direct Mail Effectively

Bring your radon message directly to people's homes. Send test kit coupons to new parents or radon brochures to new homeowners in your community. Target your list of names to the groups you most want to reach and design attractive materials to attract their attention.

4. Reach Children and their Families



Hold a Radon Poster Contest and Awards Ceremony

The National Safety Council conducts an annual radon poster contest during the radon testing season. Start early and work with your local school(s) to get students to design radon posters. For more information on the National Safety Council radon poster contest, visit www.nsc.org/issues/radon. You can also hold an awards ceremony for poster contest winners in your community. Please see page 10 for more information on holding a radon poster contest awards ceremony.

Provide Creative Radon Education Programs

Involve science students in conducting radon measurements. Sponsor educational events in 4 H or other special classes. Offer incentives such as t-shirts or parties for participating. Contact school leaders in your community to arrange special radon events for students.

Conduct a Radon Test Challenge

Challenges are a fun way to encourage testing within your community. Contact a radon test kit manufacturer (a list can be obtained from your state radon office) to obtain test kits, possibly at a discounted price and offer a challenge and "reward" for the most test kits distributed, conducted, and sent to the lab for analysis. Challenges can be conducted between cities (have your mayor challenge a neighboring community) or within your community (have schools in your community challenge each other). However you conduct your challenge, offer a "reward" for the challenge winner, but also acknowledge all participants. Check your state laws on contests before planning your radon test challenge.

Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

Host a Community Baby Shower

Many communities conduct community baby showers or other events for new or expectant mothers. This is a perfect opportunity to provide families in your community with information about a variety of health topics, including the importance of testing for radon. Provide educational materials and a test kit coupon to all attendees.

5. Work with the Media to Promote Radon Awareness

Promote Radon Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

EPA has a variety of print, radio, and television PSAs available at no cost to educate your community about the dangers of radon and the importance of radon testing. Hand delivering PSAs to your local media outlets is an effective way to reach large portions of your community, and often stations will run PSAs for free! Partnering with your local movie theater provides another opportunity to showcase the radon PSAs before the feature film. Keep in mind that people in your community may speak languages other than English, so be sure to use EPA's bi-lingual materials and to reach out to media outlets that serve non-English speaking audiences. Visit www.epapsa.com to view and order PSA materials.

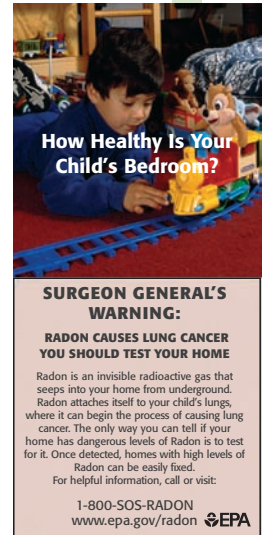
Make Your Own Radon PSA

You can also create your own local radon PSA. Local news celebrities like meteorologists, radio personalities, and sports anchors will sometimes record PSAs about a worthy cause at their own facilities as a public service. Approach the advertising department of local TV and radio stations to ask if their broadcast personalities could record a short radon announcement for the station to air throughout the radon testing season.

Once a local station has agreed to record the PSA with their talent and dedicate airtime to the PSA, write a short script for the PSA. It should be brief, containing local references and key radon messages. Work with the station's advertising department to make sure that your script's length matches the available free airtime slot (i.e., 15 to 30 seconds).

Tailor the PSA script to match the type of local celebrity you've secured. For instance, for a local sports anchor in Chicago, your script might look like this:

Hey Bears fans! Winter is time for playoffs, but it's also the best time to test your home for radon. Radon is a naturally occurring gas that can build up to a dangerous level in your home. It can cause lung cancer, and it causes about 20,000 deaths each year. Buy a radon test kit at a hardware store today and make sure you're not at risk.



Wisconsin Coordinates Media Outreach with Local Partners

When it comes to outreach for National Radon Action Month, Conrad Weiffenbach of the Wisconsin Radon Protection Program keeps it simple and local. Weiffenbach sees to it that state money designated for radon outreach makes it to the best local implementers. And to local experts across the state, his direction is straight forward—tell the media about radon, provide specific local facts, and be responsive to the public's need for radon information and assistance.

In order to coordinate a state-wide media push in January 2007, Wieffenbach organized two December regional meetings with more than 40 local health agencies and designated Radon Information Centers. At the meetings, Weiffenbach presented basic radon messages and then allowed the group to share ideas and stories in a roundtable format.

In addition to state- and EPA-issued press releases, Weiffenbach's office worked with EPA Region 5's Helen Tsiapas, who called on the Governor to issue a proclamation declaring January as Radon Action Month in Wisconsin. With the state's support, the local agencies successfully pitched the radon message to local media outlets. And a solid return of newspaper stories, network TV interviews, and radio mentions resulted in increased public inquiries and demand for radon test kits. "Local is best," Weiffenbach said. "Doing media outreach can be intimidating for some groups ... but the media can get lots of information across and they always like the local angle."

Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

Conduct a Media Campaign

In addition to promoting PSAs, contact your local media and ask them to run stories on radon during the radon testing season. Provide the media with fact sheets and other background materials and offer spokespeople for interviews. See page 18 of this Event Planning Kit for information on working with the media.

Develop a Compelling Local Story

Give radon a face in your community. Invite the media to talk with people who have tested their homes and successfully mitigated a radon problem. Providing the media with local radon data (available from your state radon program state or testing companies) will also help you localize the story for your community. Don't forget to provide information on test kit availability and qualified radon mitigation professionals in your community.

Radon Action Week is October 21-27, 2007

Radon Action Week is traditionally the third full week in October. It can be an ideal time to plan or kick-off events/activities that can build momentum toward January. For example, consider kicking off a series of events/activities in October—the beginning of the radon testing season—to be culminated and showcased in January. Consider making an important announcement in January to celebrate the accomplishments of the prior year or to launch an effort for the upcoming year. Consider ways to use both October and January to full advantage in support of your radon outreach efforts to the public and the media. For more information about Radon Action Week including additional radon outreach ideas, please visit http://healthyindoorair.org/October_radon.htm.

Identify Key Spokespeople in Your Community

Spokespeople can serve as recognizable and respected “faces” for your radon program. Perhaps you can engage local politicians, celebrities, scientists, or others that people in your community recognize and trust. Use your spokespeople for media interviews and to publicize your radon activities. Encourage your spokespeople to publicly test their homes for radon and publicize their results and subsequent actions if their tests show radon in excess of EPA's action level. You can also contact your state radon program to help identify radon technical experts if needed.

Write a Press Release

Write a press release about radon and your radon activities and distribute it to your local media outlets. A sample press release that you can customize for your community is included in this Event Planning Kit on pages 23-24.

Write an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor

Write a letter to the editor of your local paper(s) to educate your community about the health risks of radon and to encourage people to test their homes. Tips for writing an op-ed and letter to the editor and a sample op-ed that you can customize for your community are located on pages 25-26.